



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture
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Funds Available to Help Landowners Protect Sage-Grouse

Apply by April 16

RENO, March 15 — A new funding initiative to protect greater sage-grouse habitat has been launched by the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Nevada and other western states.

“Sage-grouse have been a species of concern for the past several years due to loss of habitat,” said Bruce Petersen, state conservationist for the NRCS in Nevada. “We are providing financial as well as technical assistance to landowners on private and public land to improve sage-grouse habitat.”

NRCS offers a variety of conservation practices that will improve greater sage-grouse habitat, such as removing encroached pinyon and juniper trees, planting native species, removing or retrofitting fences to make them more visible and wildlife-friendly, and installing wildlife escape ramps in existing watering facilities.

Landowners will receive cost-share payments for implementing conservation measures to improve greater sage-grouse habitat. For example, payment rates for removing pinyon and juniper trees in 2010 will be from \$200-\$600 per acre, depending on the method of removal. NRCS reimburses participants once the conservation practice has been successfully implemented. Program participants may choose to do the work themselves or hire it out.

Priority will be given to removing encroached pinyon and juniper trees within sage-grouse habitat, especially within 3 miles of active lek sites, and for range seeding within sage-grouse habitat affected by wildfire. Removing or retrofitting fences and installing wildlife escape ramps are also high priorities.

“We hope to create healthy, self-sustaining sage-grouse populations with this initiative,” said Petersen.

Financial assistance will be provided under two 2008 Farm Bill programs: the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Landowners must meet 2008 Farm Bill eligibility requirements.

Other states participating in the initiative are California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

For more information, contact your local NRCS office or go online to www.nv.nrcs.usda.gov.

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Persons requiring special accommodations or materials in an alternative format or language should contact Liz Warner, Public Affairs Officer, (775) 857.8500 x 105.

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